



# COASTAL CONNECTIONS

AN UPDATE FROM CAMP ARANZAZU

APRIL 2024

## A LETTER *from our* PRESIDENT

Camp Aranzazu Friends,

**I'm** thrilled to announce that, thanks to the incredible support from our community, we've had the privilege of serving more than 28,750 campers since our doors opened in 2006. Last year marked a milestone as we welcomed 1,839 campers from 49 diverse partner groups – our largest turnout yet! Even with a 40% growth in campers, our team's commitment to ensuring each camper feels welcomed and loved remained unwavering.

Our 2023 post-camp surveys revealed:

- 79% of campers agreed they could be themselves at camp;
- 84% of campers felt they belonged in the camp community;
- 87% of campers made at least two great friends; and
- 74% of campers felt more confident as a result of their time at camp.

**OUR NEW**  
*Mission*



"I tried things I was scared to do."



As Aralynn, an eight-year-old cancer patient, said, **"I love coming to Camp Aranzazu because I feel strong and unstoppable and not alone."**

This impact isn't something we achieve alone; it's the result of a vast community of supporters, like you, who believe in our mission and our team. Your trust and belief in Camp Aranzazu as a special place make it possible for us to provide joy, respite, and growth. A heartfelt thank you for being a vital part of our community and for creating moments of happiness for campers of all ages and abilities.

With gratitude,

Kurt R. Podeszwa  
President/CEO



**W**e are thrilled to share the exciting news that we recently updated our mission statement! **Camp Aranzazu cultivates belonging for campers of all ages and abilities by creating accessible, empowering, and intentional camp experiences.** What prompted this change? Over the last 17 years the need for Camp Aranzazu has grown as has the community we serve. The board and staff wanted to update our mission to reflect our impact on campers and describe the camp culture. With this updated mission, our team will continue to set and achieve big goals while providing top-notch services to our campers year after year.

To bring this vision to reality, the Board has approved a new three-year strategic plan, setting our sights on growth and building upon the unique culture our team has created. With a focus on programs, institutional strength, facilities, and development, this plan is the compass guiding our growth.

Visit <https://camparanzazu.org/about#strategic-plan> to dig into the details. Our team is already working toward accomplishing these goals and can't wait to share our progress.

We're eager to share the journey with you. Together, let's create a future of endless opportunities and transformative camp experiences!

## ENDOWMENT UPDATE



"I'll be able to work through challenges at home from my week at camp."

## RESILIENCY FUND CAMPAIGN NEWS

The Camp Aranzazu Resiliency Fund Campaign has successfully reached a milestone with \$5.7 million invested! Our team remains grateful for Virginia Ballard, an integral force behind this endowment after nearly nine years of dedicated service. Virginia has now transitioned responsibility for the second phase of the campaign to Camp Aranzazu staff.

Campaign co-chair, Bobby Hatcher, reflects on her impactful legacy, saying, "Virginia propelled the Camp forward, emphasizing resiliency to ensure accessibility for campers of all ages and abilities for years to come. I'm proud to have worked alongside her as we achieved lofty goals, built a robust team, and embraced resilience."

For more details about the Resiliency Fund, please visit [www.camparanzazu.org/resiliency-fund](http://www.camparanzazu.org/resiliency-fund).



## SAIL AWAY *with* CAMP ARANZAZU



If you've been keeping up with Camp Aranzazu on Facebook or Instagram, you've likely witnessed our team's dedication to expanding programs and fostering connections within our local community. Last fall, our team took a leap in enhancing our non-summer sailing initiatives, introducing Aranzazu Sail Away—a more accessible and inclusive sailing experience tailored for kids in the Coastal Bend.

Open to students in 1st to 12th grade from our local community, Aranzazu Sail Away offers a free 20-minute personalized introduction to

sailing with our skilled Skippers in an Access 303 Dinghy. This new program allows us to open our doors to community members, introducing them to one of the most unique features at Camp Aranzazu, and to help our Sail Away participants build confidence by learning a new skill in a safe environment.

It's never too early to get excited about a fun, free sailing opportunity! Watch our website and social media platforms for the Sail Away dates beginning in September! Let's set sail for more unforgettable experiences together!

## *Up Next on the Camp Aranzazu Calendar!*

# ZAZU

15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

MUSIC and MORE

**Come JAM with us!**

15th annual ZaZu Music and More

*honoring*

Driscoll Children's Hospital

Corpus Christi

April 27th



**Get CLAY-ZY with us!**

San Antonio Gun Club

September 25th



**PULL together with us!**

Houston Greater Sports Club

December 5th